Knoxville born singer Nicole Long may have come from humble beginnings, but her voice is truly rich in vibrance, timbre and expressiveness. There's good reason why she's been plucked from obscurity more than once and featured on prestigious stages to thunderous accolades.

Long's story begins like many others. She comes from a religious, southern family and grew up singing in church. Music was always a love of hers, so she continued singing in various bands to make money for school clothes but her family wanted her to take a more serious path. Thankfully, she had an outstanding choir director in high school that always believed in her talent. Long attended Knoxville College on a vocal scholarship and went on to sing with jazz-fusion artist Rod McGaha.

Years of touring took their toll along with several attempts at a solo career. By this time, Long was a wife and mother so she decided to leave music for a time and work in the corporate world to help support her family. But singing never left her. Through the years, her husband and son would hear her sing in church or at an occasional wedding and try to encourage her dream, but Long had made the decision to push music aside.

Fast forward nearly 10 years, and Long went on an audition for a choir role in the Elton John musical Aida, at a local amateur theater. She auditioned without a monologue, thinking she would be lucky to get a background part. The director was so impressed with her voice; she was cast in the lead role without any acting experience. By the third performance, the show was selling out and Long received a standing ovation. “That sparked something new,” she said. “I knew I wouldn’t be able to sit still in my office anymore.”

After the show closed, Long attended an open audition for the Alliance Theater’s production of Jesus Christ Superstar Gospel. Out of 300 people who auditioned in Atlanta and New York (including experienced Broadway actors) she landed the role of Mary Magdalene. When she found out, she said, “I went out to my car and literally cried, I was that overwhelmed.” Receiving rave reviews on her performance, Long knew that even after the show closed, singing was something she couldn’t let go of again.

But it would be 5 years before she’d have another opportunity. The Alliance Theater called her again to play the lead singer role in a stage production of the Pulitzer Prize winning book, Native Guard. The show’s musical director, Tyrone Jackson, became a fast friend and introduced Long to Ernest Coleman (EC3) believing that she should seriously pursue music. EC3 heard Long’s voice coupled with her passion for music. He and Jackson quickly went to work to produce Long’s first solo project. She says, “I don’t have words to thank these guys enough for hearing the possibility in me.”

Long's album, Fly, named after the Al Jarreau tune (one of 8 standards she’s breathed new life into on her upcoming smooth jazz album) is slated to be released September 22, 2018. She also composed 2 original songs entitled, “Black South” and “Stealing A Line.”

Thrilled to launch her solo career, she says, “I want to be somebody that people want to listen to, then the rest of it comes. The recognition, the demand for my music, it’s my life.”

www.NicoleBanksLong.com
SHORT BIO:

Knoxville born singer Nicole Long may have come from humble beginnings, but her voice is truly rich in vibrance, timbre and expressiveness. There’s good reason why she’s been plucked from obscurity more than once and featured on prestigious stages to thunderous accolades.

Long grew up singing in church. After attending Knoxville College on a vocal scholarship, she went on to tour with jazz-fusion artist Rod McGaha. Long continued playing the lead role in a local theater production of Aida, which led to her starring, to rave reviews, in the Alliance Theater production of Jesus Christ Superstar Gospel as Mary Magdalene. Alliance came calling again several years later and offered Long the lead singer role in their stage production of the Pulitzer Prize winning book Native Guard.

With great excitement, the show’s musical director Tyrone Jackson partnered with Ernest Coleman (EC3) to produce Long’s first smooth jazz album entitled Fly, slated to be released September 22, 2018.

PRESS:

“Long delivers a soul-quickening, career-making performance...her take on the signature song, “I Don’t Know How to Love Him,” is a tour-de-force.”
– Atlanta Journal-Constitution

“Long breaks into a fiery rendition of Nina Simone’s “Mississippi Goddam.”
– NY TIMES

“exquisite and tender”
– Atlanta Journal-Constitution

“...standout performance”
– ARTSATL

“Long might be the most out-of-nowhere success story of this, or perhaps any, local theater season. Her improbable journey — from ditching a singing career in her 20s for family life and corporate jobs, to her star turn on Atlanta’s most celebrated stage despite never having acted professionally — is a no-hype “American Idol” narrative that gives hope to the undiscovered and unfulfilled everywhere.”
– The Atlanta Journal-Constitution